

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 TO JANUARY 15, 2021



GIVING THANKS VOL. 2



October 29, 2020

Dear PMB Colleagues:

This year's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is well underway, with employees from every agency and office in DOI showing they care about their neighbors, communities and especially those in need due to circumstances surrounding COVID-19. I am so grateful to be part of a tradition that started more than fifty years ago, and I am honored to support CFC by encouraging your participation in this year's campaign. From international organizations with names we all recognize to local charities focused on issues of particular need at home, your donation will be gratefully received and put to good use. The Department has set a target of \$400,000 in contributions by January 15, 2021. Can you help us reach our goal?

As we approach Veterans Day, my thoughts turn to the men and women who served so admirably in the armed forces to defend our freedom, some of whom may be in need of financial or other support. The U.S. Department of Defense lists a number of [veteran support organizations](#) that participate in the CFC. Many more local groups find ways to provide assistance to veterans. If you are looking for opportunities to support our heroes, please take a moment to search for organizations in your community through the [CFC Home Page](#) search function.

This is a busy time of year, a time when our thoughts turn to holiday gatherings with our loved ones, some in person and perhaps some virtual. As we navigate through these active times, I encourage you to carve out a few moments and tap into our collective power as employees of the Department of the Interior to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than we are. With multiple ways to give and so many charities to support, I encourage you to consider a contribution through the CFC to the organizations that mean the most to you.

Please pledge today at [GiveCFC.org](#), and let's make this our best CFC season yet for the Department of the Interior.

Thank you.

Scott J. Cameron
Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget





Honoring a Loved One

By Patrick Morton
Program Lead/Geologist, AVSO

My mother died in the spring of 2017 after a long battle with lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer death worldwide. In lieu of flowers, my sister and I asked that friends and family make donations to Swim Across America (SAA). Thanks to those donations, my sister was able to meet 100% of her fundraising goal for her 1 mile open-water circuit on the Magothy River in Maryland that summer. That's my sister, Janna Morton, pictured below.

Charity swims hosted by SAA raise money for cancer research, prevention, and treatment. Through much of her life, our mother had chronic ailments that made most physical exercise prohibitively painful, but swimming was an activity that she was able to enjoy. Even in her illness, up until the point that she was on oxygen constantly, she and my sister would regularly swim together at the local YMCA. We were very happy to be able to honor her through a charity that not only works to fight the terrible disease that took her life, but also promotes one of her life's joys.





Left to right: Lily, Gigi and Harris loved dressing up for their fall photo shoot, ever hopeful that one of those pictures would catch someone's eye and get them a Forever Home.

Paws-On Charity

By Gary Bremen, Biscayne National Park Ranger

Do you remember what it was like during the 35-day Federal shutdown in 2019? The longest shutdown in US history was stressful for most. I began to equate the term “non-essential” with “unimportant.” As someone who decided to work for the Federal Government when I was 7 and to do it for an agency whose mission meant so much to me (the National Park Service), I got pretty depressed. So I walked into Abandoned Pet Rescue in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and told the manager there that I’d scoop poop, clean cages, wash dishes, do laundry...anything that DIDN’T involve spending time with the 30-40 dogs or 200+ cats that lived at the no-kill shelter. As an animal lover with two “kids” at home, and having recently lost a third, I just didn’t think I could handle it.

And so, I was “hired,” and introduced to a mountain of dirty food and water bowls. As the sink slowly emptied, someone would walk by with another pile. It was relentless, but I enjoyed it knowing that I was helping the animals until they could be adopted. One problem: the sink was next to a cage

full of kittens. They were absolutely adorable with their squeaky little voices, bright blue eyes, and perfect tiny pink toes splayed out towards me begging for attention. But I stood my ground, steadfast in my promise to not get emotionally involved with the animals. I was NOT bringing home another!

Those pink toes, though!

Soon I was hugging kittens who had no idea how needle-like their tiny teeth were. When I sat down in one of the large free-roaming cat rooms to pet (we call it “socialize” at the shelter) an adult cat, I felt somebody playing with my already-sparse hair. It tickled. I laughed out load for the first time in a while. I took a selfie-video of the tiny kitten “attacking” my head, and soon everyone on social media knew what I had already confessed to myself: I was a goner.

After the shutdown ended, I just couldn’t stop going. When the COVID-19 pandemic again disrupted all our lives, and my plans for a vacation were foiled, I started using my vacation time a little each week to volunteer more.

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For someone who loves working directly with the public, helping the cats and dogs gave me a sense of fulfillment I was no longer getting at work.

Abandoned Pet Rescue averages almost one new arrival every day of the year, and it is just one shelter among many across the nation. In this time that is so crazy for all of us, funding for the animal shelter is down 40% due to in-person fundraisers being canceled and many donors facing hardships. The shelter's operating expenses have increased due to a rise in animals being surrendered and higher veterinary care costs. The silver-lining? More people have been applying to adopt pets during the pandemic as they are home seeking companionship, but it's important for adopters to make a lifetime commitment to a pet.

So, what can YOU do to help?

Role model? Make sure your own pets are spayed and neutered to stop the vicious cycle of overpopulation.

Like to exercise? So do shelter dogs! Why not get trained to be a dog walker?

Social media maven? Share posts from shelters...you never know what connections will be made.

Good photographer? Great pictures (like the ones accompanying this story) are crucial links in the adoption process.

Neat Freak? Dishes, laundry and poop pile up pretty quickly at an animal shelter, and the work takes little training to fulfill.

Amazon shopper? Use Smile.Amazon.com instead and

designate the donation to a shelter of your choice.

Thrifty shopper? Look for sales on quality (no dyes) cat and dog food. Pick up an extra gallon of vinegar, box of baking soda, Dawn dish soap or high efficiency laundry soap and drop it by your local shelter.



Handy? There's always something for volunteers to fix.

Crafty? Make up baskets of goodies to be sold or raffled at events that benefit the shelter.

Stressed? Research shows that petting a dog or cat reduces stress levels in just ten minutes.

Afraid of Commitment? Foster a dog or cat. Some animals just don't do well with others of their species and crave a quieter environment.

Planner? Don't forget your pets if something should happen to you. They'll be scared and having someone they know taking care of them is way better than going to a shelter.

Adopt! Please reconsider shopping for a pet when so many animals are in desperate need all across the country.

Donate! Through the CFC or by some other means, your donations are crucial for food, supplies and medical care, as well as utilities and rent.

Today, I can't imagine my life without my time at Abandoned Pet Rescue. I have my favorites there (looking at you Simba, Isabella, Evie, Manny and Dove!), but the best days are when I go in and see one of "my" kids listed on the adoption board. It's OK though, because I know they are safe at home playing or watching TV with the human they've rescued.

Above: Amelia was fostered by the author, but is now with him permanently.

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GIVING THANKS

What better time than November to give thanks by participating in the Combined Federal Campaign? Charitable organizations across the country rely on donations, especially during the winter months, to brighten the lives of those who struggle with food insecurity. According to healthypeople.gov/2020, many millions of households experience a disruption of food intake (quantity and quality) because of lack of money or other resources.

Through donations to hunger-focused organizations, you can make a difference putting a nutritious Thanksgiving meal on the table for families everywhere. Start by searching for “Food, Agriculture & Nutrition” organizations on the CFC Giving site below to find organizations in your community.

givecfc.org

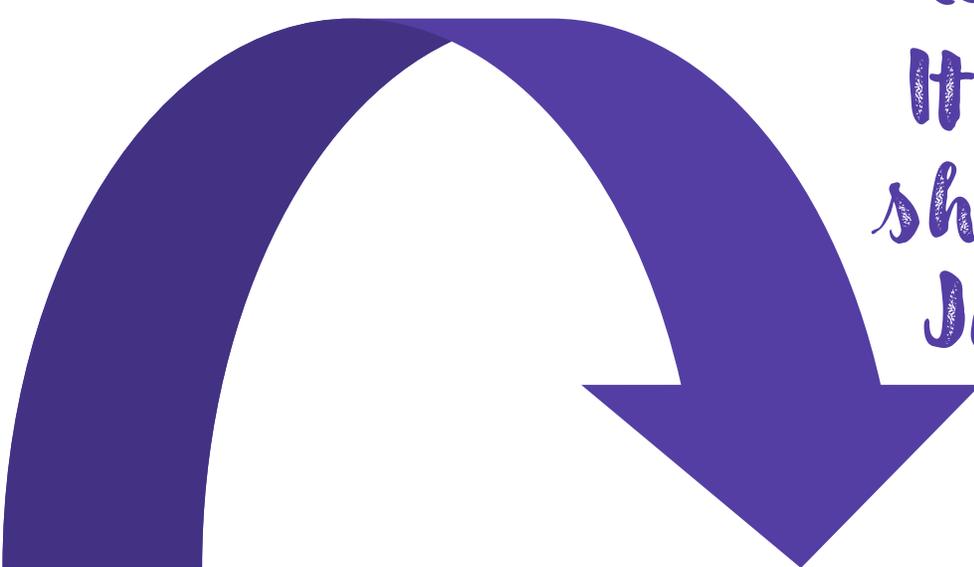


Have a question or need assistance? Your CFC keyworkers are here to help! Please reach out anytime. Thanks!

CFC KEYWORKERS: POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

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Please note: if your office does not have a CFC keyworker listed, please feel free to reach out to Steve Carlisle and Jennifer Stevenson, CFC PMB Co-chairs, at pmb_cfc@ios.doi.gov. Thank you!



Ready to give?
It's so easy to
show you care:
Just click on
the link!